

UK damage prevention benchmarking survey

About the survey

There is an estimate 4 mill. excavations conducted annually in the UK. Each year a number of these result in damage to UK's vast network of underground service lines, risking human life or health and often with significant negative consequences in a society more and more reliant on infrastructure services.

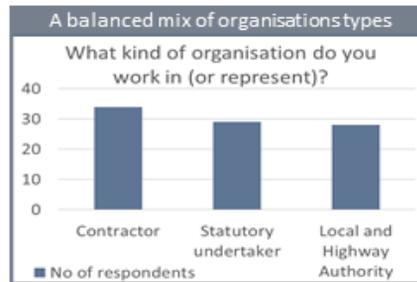
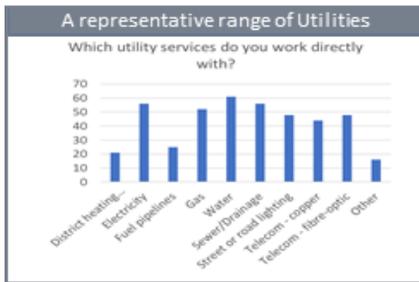
The objectives of this survey has been to discover and investigate. This, in order to provide information about key industry practices, raise awareness, and enable prioritisation of initiatives in the industry.



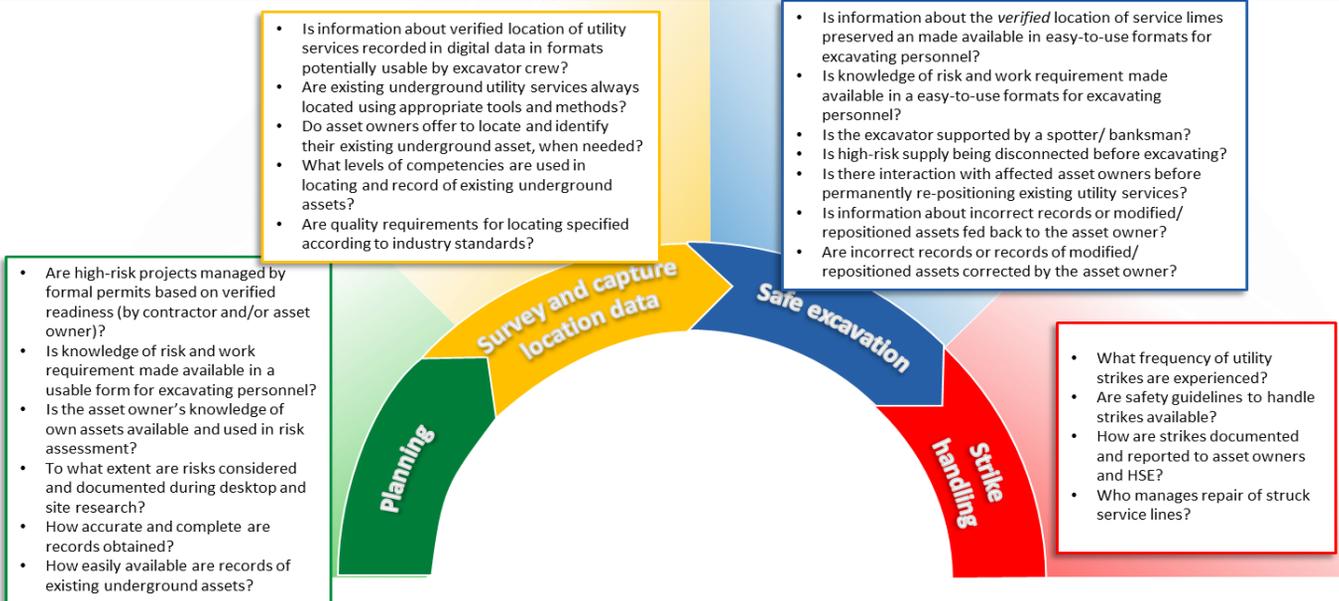
The survey was developed by a partnership consisting of Street Works UK, the Joint Authorities Group (JAG UK) and Geomatikk. The survey was subsequently supported by the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA).

Respondents and participation

- ✓ Respondents selected by the three member organisations. 91 persons responding to all or selected parts of survey
- ✓ 31 questions investigating industry practices, including HSG 47 * prescribed practices (*practice guidance issued by HSE*)
- ✓ Questions focusing on respondents agreement/disagreement with practices statements.
- ✓ Approach allowing comparison of perceived practices between sides of the ecosystem.
- ✓ Validity testing was done with industry practitioners



Practices investigated

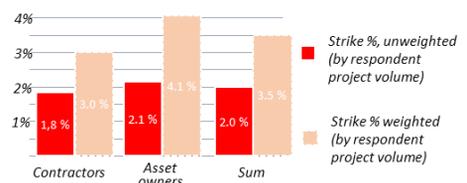
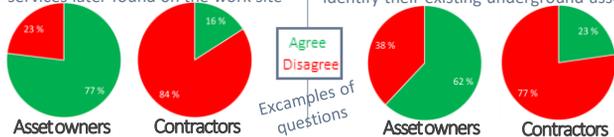


Uncovered: Striking differences in of perception

Estimated: Strike frequency for respondent companies

"Statutory records obtained normally show all utility services later found on the work site"

"Asset owners in general offer to locate and identify their existing underground asset"

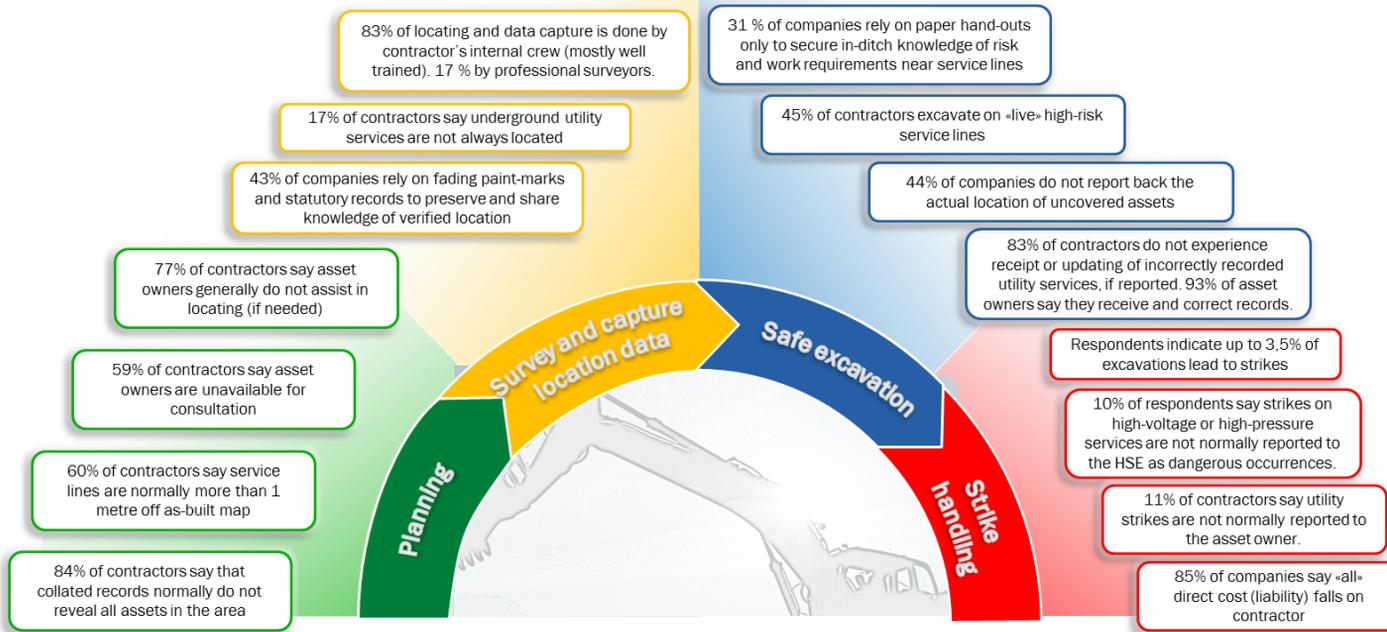


Different sides of ecosystem reported strikingly different views on key matters

Respondents report that 2.0-3.5% of excavations lead to strikes

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Main findings



Top root-causes of strikes and top initiatives for avoidance

The respondents pointed to the following as main root-causes of strikes and initiatives to reduce strike frequency:

TOP ROOT CAUSES (by % of votes)

| OVERALL RANK | | RANK BY CONTRACTORS | RANK BY ASSET OWNERS |
|--------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Accuracy and quality of information in Statutory record | 1 | 2 |
| 1. | Insufficient practices from excavating personnel | 2 | 1 |
| 3. | Insufficient construction and encasement practices | 3 | 5 |
| 4. | Insufficient practices from locating personnel | 4 | 3 |
| 5. | Insufficient competency or skills from excavating personnel | 7 | 4 |
| 6. | Insufficient interaction between contractor and Statutory Undertak... | 5 | 6 |

TOP INITIATIVES (by % of votes)

| OVERALL RANK | | RANK BY CONTRACTORS | RANK BY ASSET OWNERS |
|--------------|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Improve quality of information in statutory records | 1 | 1 |
| 2. | Improve access to Statutory records | 2 | 4 |
| 3. | Improved safe digging work systems and follow-up practices | 5 | 2 |
| 4. | Improved awareness/attitudes on risk and impacts from strikes | 3 | 5 |
| 5. | Increased awareness of responsibilities to assure safe practices | 6 | 3 |
| 6. | Improved interaction between Contr... and Statutory Undertak... | 4 | 10 |

Questions posed - areas for improvements

Behaviour

- What drives the differences in perception of current practices between asset owners and contractors?
- How could work and follow-up systems be developed to help field operatives raise awareness and improve ability to follow best practices?

Information

- Should improvement initiatives related to maps/records focus on centralising availability of current records, or on improving quality of records?
- Should intervention focus on improving documentation quality of new or also legacy asset records?

Liability

- How should legacy construction and documentation challenges affect responsibilities and liability in the ecosystem?
- Are current incentives sufficient to drive practices?

Organisations behind the survey



Street Works UK is the Trade Association representing utilities and their contractors on street works issues. Street Works UK promotes best practice, self-regulation and a two-way relationship with Government and other relevant stakeholders, and is also the utility arm of the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee, HAUC(UK).



The Joint Authorities Group (UK) - JAG(UK) - represents the organisations responsible for the roads and streets of the United Kingdom. JAG(UK) supports the management of works on the street and road network and coordination with other events affecting the network. JAG(UK) also provides a link between governments and authorities.



The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) is the representative body for companies who work day-to-day to deliver, upgrade, and maintain the country's infrastructure. CECA has a nationwide network of autonomous regions across England, Scotland and Wales along with a national office at the heart of Westminster.



Geomatikk delivers a best practice digital platform, field applications, and in-field surveying services to prevent utility strikes. The services and solutions streamline processes for Asset owners and Contractors in managing and supporting excavation work. The Geomatikk Group delivers underground surveying on about 200.000 projects annually.